

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

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R 060902Z MAY 78

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4271

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, UR

SUBJ: MAY 9 WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT PISKARYOV CEMETERY

REF: RUECKERT-BROWN TELECON OF MAY 3

1. FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH EMBASSY (REF) WE WILL BE PARTICIPATING AGAIN THIS YEAR IN MAY 9 WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT PISKARYOV MEMORIAL CEMETERY COMMEMORATING THE END OF WORLD WAR II. AS A RULE, ALLIED PARTICIPATION IN SECOND WORLD WAR IS TOTALLY FORGOTTEN IN OFFICIAL SPEECHES AT CEREMONIES WHICH GLORIFY SOVIET VICTORY "UNDER LEADERSHIP OF COMMUNIST PARTY." FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL LEGRAIN THIS YEAR HAS ARRANGED TO BE OUT OF TOWN, AND HE HAS NOT AUTHORIZED HIS DEPUTY TO TAKE PART. HE WILL, HOWEVER, BE PARTICIPATING IN JOINT FRENCH-SOVIET CEREMONY AT CEMETERY SEVERAL DAYS LATER. HOWEVER, OTHER WESTERN CONSUL GENERALS IN THE CITY WILL PARTICIPATE IN MAY 9 EVENT AS IN PAST.

2. CONSUL GENERAL NEUBERT POINTEDLY REMINDED LENINGRAD POLITBURO MEMBER AND REGIONAL PARTY CHIEF, G.V. ROMANOV, ABOUT MUTUAL ASPECT OF WORLD WAR II VICTORY AT CONCLUSION

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OF CEREMONIES LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, WE DECIDED TO GET THE JUMP THIS YEAR BY MAKING SAME POINT ON INSCRIPTION FOR OUR WREATH. ACCORDINGLY, WE ASKED UPIP TO CHANGE THE INSCRIPTION FROM LAST YEAR'S STANDARD FORMULATION, "TO THE HEROIC DEFENDERS OF LENINGRAD" TO A FORMULATION WHICH READS, "IN MEMORY OF OUR MUTUAL VICTORY; IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO FELL FOR US."

3. THIS SET OFF SERIES OF EXCHANGES INVOLVING UPIP AND DIPLOMATIC AGENCY. UPIP HAD TEMERITY TO INFORM US THAT CHANGE WAS POLITICAL IN NATURE AND WOULD REQUIRE DIPLOMATIC AGENCY'S APPROVAL. DIPLOMATIC AGENCY CHIEF YEFIMOV RAN FOR COVER AND REFERRED US BACK TO UPIP, WHICH THEN SAID, IT WAS TOO LATE TO MAKE REQUESTED CHANGE. WHEN WE THREATENED SIMPLY TO WITHDRAW FROM ACTIVITIES UPIP, HOWEVER, FOUND THAT CHANGE COULD BE MADE AFTER ALL.

4. WE WILL BE CLOSELY MONITORING SPEECHES AND CEREMONIES ON MAY 9 AND IF THERE IS NO CHANGE IN NATURE OF SOVIET SPEECHES AND HANDLING OF WORLD WAR II VICTORY, WE BELIEVE SERIOUS THOUGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DROPPING U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THIS EVENT NEXT YEAR.
BUCHANAN

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